



## Environmental News

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**EPA-NEW ENGLAND ANNOUNCES A MEETING  
AND INVITES COMMENTS ON CONTINUED STORAGE OF  
HOT SPOT SEDIMENTS AT  
NEW BEDFORD HARBOR SUPERFUND SITE**

Boston - EPA-New England and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection in conjunction with the New Bedford Forum announce a meeting and invite comments on the proposed use of the Sawyer Street Confined Disposal Facility (CDF) to store untreated Hot Spot sediments for 4-5 years while other treatment options are evaluated and implemented.

A meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, March 28 at 7:00 p.m.** at the Greater New Bedford Vocational Technical High School to discuss the proposed change and to begin a 30-day comment period. Public comments will be accepted from March 29 through May 1, 1995. Copies of the document proposing the change will be available at the meeting and will also be placed in the administrative record at the New Bedford Public Library, 613 Pleasant Street, New Bedford, MA and EPA Record Center, 90 Canal Street, Boston, MA.

The meeting on March 28 will allow the EPA and MADEP to explain the need and rationale for the proposed onsite continued storage of the Hot Spot sediments, and hear comments from the surrounding communities. All comments received on this proposal will be taken into consideration and addressed before a final decision is made.

The original cleanup plan called for dredging the PCB Hot Spot sediments, dewatering, and incineration of the sediments. During that process, untreated sediment would have been stored for a short period of time in an onsite, double-lined lagoon (i.e., in the CDF). However, due to local opposition to incineration, a forum of local and state officials, citizen groups, and state and federal agencies was formed to discuss all the concerns. Through the forum a consensus was reached to suspend incineration plans and instead

identify and test alternative methods of treating the sediments. Meanwhile, EPA through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, has continued dredging of the Hot Spot sediments, and with extensive citizen involvement has begun the process for performing treatability studies. Onsite treatability pilot studies are expected to occur late this fall.

The Corps and their contractors have dredged over half of the highly contaminated Hot Spot sediments, and expect to complete the dredging by fall. The dredged material is deposited in the lagoon as originally planned, however, it will now remain in the lagoon significantly longer than anticipated in the original plan while the alternative treatment technologies are identified and tested. EPA-New England believes the use of the lagoon for this longer-term storage of these sediments does not present an unacceptable risk to human health or the environment based on the design and construction of the lagoon. Hot Spot sediments account for approximately 45 percent of the total mass of PCBs in the site sediment. Dredging and removing these sediments will prevent direct contact with the sediments and will significantly limit the amount of PCBs migrating to the marine food chain and the air.

Extensive studies confirm that the Hot Spot sediments are a major source of contamination, spreading PCBs throughout the harbor. In 1982, EPA added the site to the National Priorities List. The companies responsible for harbor contamination have agreed in three separate legal settlements to pay about \$100 million toward the cleanup, past EPA and state investigations, and natural resources restoration projects.

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